# The great silk road - the road to communication and international relations

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This article reveals the history of the Great Silk Road and its role as an international transit route for several centuries. The author acknowledges the extent to which these mediating relations, which have had a significant impact on the development of international trade and cultural cooperation, have influenced the development of relations between different nations, peoples and even interregional relations.

**Keywords:** Great Silk Road, Europe, Asia, cultural exchanges, trade relations, international transit.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Great Silk Road is an international trade and communication route connecting Europe and Asia, dating back to ancient times.

When we say the Great Silk Road, we mean trade caravans that crossed the desert thousands of years ago. Thousands of miles of roads, mountain gorges, snow-capped peaks, and barren steppes were lined with cities, markets, caravanserais, and cisterns.

This path was introduced into science in the 70s of the XIX century by the German scientist Ferdinand Paul Wilhelm Richthofen (1833-1905) under the term "Silk Road". Before that, this road was called the "Western Meridian Road". In science there are different views on when and where silk appeared, which is the essence of this way of caravan trade. It is no secret that China is recognized in science as the birthplace of silk [2: 54-57]. There are many legends about the origin of silk in China. According to one of the existing legends, silk appeared in China in the III millennium BC. The Chinese ruler Chin Chong took care of silk and mulberry silkworms, as well as silk trees. In another story, in 2698 BC, and in another story, in 2600 BC, while the Chinese Queen Xi Lin Chi was drinking tea in the garden, in the shade of mulberry trees, a cocoon softened in hot tea fell from under her cup and its fibers spread. No matter how hard Queen C tries to pull the cocoon threads out of the cup, she cannot clean the tea from the silk thread until her long strands are stretched. According to legend, the way the cocoon fibre was obtained was known after this incident. The Chinese attribute the discovery of the cocoon to the god of heaven. Xi is a princess in the eyes of the goddess of heaven, and she is deified and temples are built in her name. To this day, the annual Silk Festival in honor of Princess Shiga is held in China [5: 44-48]. In short, the Silk Road is connected to this silk trade in China.

#### 2. MAIN PART

The first common breeding ground for silkworms in China is Shandong Province, located in the lower reaches of Huang He. The city of Xian (Shaanxi Province) in ancient China is the starting point of the Silk Road.

According to academician A. Askarov, the Great Silk Road begins from the ancient center of China, Xiang, and goes to Dunhuang through Lanzhou. Here it is divided into two parts. The southwestern branch of the Great Silk Road went through the Taklamakon desert to Khotan, from there to Yorkent, through the gorges of the Pamir Mountains to Wahon, and from there to Zariasp (Balkh), the capital of Bactria.

In Balkh the road is divided into three more branches, the western branch goes to Merv, the southern branch to India and the northern branch through Termez to Darband, Nautak and Samarkand.

The northwestern branch of the Great Silk Road runs from Dunhuang through Bashi, Kuchi and Turfan to the Tarim oasis of Kashgar. Through Tashkurgan it connects with Uzgen, Osh, Kuva, Akhsikent, Pop, then across the Asht steppe with Khojand, Zaamin, Jizzak, and then from Samarkand to Nautak. The road goes from Samarkand to the west - Dobusya, through Malik desert to Bukhara and Romitan, from there through Varakhsha to Boykent and Farob to Amul city. Amulda joined the road from Marva to Urgench through Amu.

The ancient city of Marv was the largest city on the Silk Road thanks to its ancient traditions and geographical convenience of connecting caravan tracks in different directions. That is why Marv, in addition to the local religion of Zoroastrian temples, there were pillars of the Buddhist, Byzantine Christian world of India. The ancient Silk Road was a large caravan from Merv to the west based on the "Lazurite Road" and the "Royal Road", which passed through the region connecting China, India and the Middle East with the Middle East and the Mediterranean [3: 176-184].

After the travel of the talented Chinese diplomat Zhang Qiang to Central Asia via Fergana in the 2nd century B.C., the Great Silk Road became a permanent communication route between East and West. During this period, the Great Silk Road in Central Asia had two routes: the first through Fergana, and the second through Hindu Kush and Badakhshan. The first through Fergana was the main transcontinental road. The second route is seasonal and is valid only in the summer months of the year.

During the Kushan period, trade, domestic and foreign trade developed. The Great Silk Road played an important role in the development of trade relations. At the end of the 2nd century B.C. Chinese troops invaded the Dovan (Fergana) lands. Since then, trade relations between Central Asia and China have been developing and silk has entered Fergana, Sogdia and Bactria. As the caravan route developed, trade developed. Chinese traders brought mainly raw silk and silk fabrics, gold, leather and other goods to Central Asia, while Central Asian traders brought gold, gems, jewelry and so on to China.

At the beginning of our era the developed civilized states of the ancient world were divided into four main states: Rome in the Mediterranean Sea, Parthia in the Middle East, the Han state in China and the powerful Kushan Empire, which united modern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Stretching from the British Isles in the west to the Pacific coast in the east, these four great kingdoms were connected for the first time in human history by a road known as the Great Silk Road. The Silk Road stretched from the capital of the Han Empire in China through Kushan and Parthia states to the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. As a result, many thousands of kilometers (total length 12 000 km) of countries were able to communicate with each other (6: 146-166).

Many caravanserais and towns were built along the Great Silk Road. Merchants walking along this road often did not go all the way. Since Central Asian regions were located in the middle of this road, traders usually sold their goods and bought local produce in Khorezm, Samarkand, Termez and elsewhere.

Later Roman sources showed that Arab geographers believed that iron and steel products were mostly delivered to the Roman Empire from the state of Kushan. The Chinese were first struck by Fergana horses, which could overcome long and difficult roads. According to Chinese sources, the Chinese emperor has agreed to refuse all province of Xinjiang for pair Fergana tulpars. Woolen and woolen fabrics, sheepskin, weapons and gems were also sold to China. In turn, silk, various Chinese fabrics and porcelain were imported from China. The Kushan state also had trade relations with large and small provinces, steppe and foothill nomads.

As mentioned above, the importance of the Great Silk Road in this relationship was incomparable. During the Samanid period, which was centralized in the IX–X centuries, one of the main branches of the Great Silk Road passed through Fergana. Trade caravans from India, Iran and the Mediterranean passed through Samarkand and went to Khojand, then the road was divided into two, one through Pop (Bob), Axikent to Kuva, and another through Soh, Rishtan, Margilan, connecting the first road in Kuva. Sent to Osh (Ibn Hordadbeh, Istakhri, Ibn Khawkal). After Osh this Great Silk Trading Road as before passed to China through Uzgen, Otbosi and Terekdavon.

The branch of the Great Silk Road passing through Northern Fergana (Khojand-Bob-Akhsikent-Kuba) was divided into two after Akhsiken in XI-XII centuries: one through Miyon-Rudan ("between two rivers"), and the other from Akhsiken to Margilan instead of Kuba. As a result of rapid development of mining in the area of Soh-Haydarkan in southern Fergana, the Great Silk Road network passing through

Southern Fergana (Khojand-Rishtan-Kubo-Osh) apparently came to Margilan in the 11th century, passing through Soh-Haydarkan, Okhna, Kadamjay, Vodil.

Rishtan became a village in XI-XII centuries. Quva (Qubo), on the other hand, loses its former status and becomes a small town. Convenience of natural ecological conditions and passage of northern and southern branches of the Great Silk way through Fergana through Margilan in the beginning of XI–XIII centuries, according to As-Samani, have made it "one of the largest cities". [6: 146-166].

By the 11th century, during the Karakhanids, the political capital was moved from Akhsikent to Uzgen. According to archaeological materials, Akhsikent remained the economic center of the entire Fergana Valley in the XI-XII centuries, as Akhsikent was one of the largest cities on the Great Silk Road. There were continuous trade caravans from China, Mediterranean countries and India.

In Central Asia, the influence of the Arab Caliphate has weakened and the influence of local feudal lords, especially the Tahirids and Samanids, has increased. By the end of the ninth century, Central Asia had gained independence, and the first state that escaped Arab influence, Samanids, was formed. Later Khorezmshahs, Gaznevids, Seljuks and Karakhanids acted in the region. Such cities as Bukhara, Samarkand, Merv, Old Urgench and Khiva became known as cultural centers of their time. Trade, crafts, social and political life and cultural relations and knowledge centers flourished here. Such economic and cultural centers became known as centers of communication, continuing the ancient tradition of the Silk Road, which connects various countries of the vast Muslim East, West and East, North and South. There are also many sources about the growth of handicrafts, trade, trade routes, agriculture and construction in the VIII-XIII centuries, especially in Samarkand, Bukhara, Shosh, Akhsikent-Fergana, Cuba, Margilan, Osh, Uzkand, Urushon, Khojand and Urgench. A number of cities such as Khiva, Merv and Termez provide important information on architectural monuments, markets and landscape design. Historians and travellers of that time wrote various works in Arabic describing cultural life, scientists, poets, writers and various cultural figures in Central Asian cities, such as Kifti, Ibn Usaybah, Ibn Khalkakan, Yakt Hamawi, Aruzi Samarkandi, Saalibi, Bayhaki and others.

During the early revival of Central Asia, i.e. in the IX-XII centuries, thanks to a single religion, a large territory of Islam - the development of relations between different peoples and countries of the Middle East, the emergence of a certain community in culture, spirituality and the growing importance of the former Silk Road. We see international trade, growth of handicrafts, development of cities.

At the beginning of the 13th century, the peoples of Central Asia were invaded by the Mongols led by Genghis Khan. In particular, many cities and cultural monuments were destroyed. Scientists were killed, other countries were persecuted, science and culture were in deep depression. In the 13th century Genghis Khan took under his control all branches of the Silk Road. This situation lasted until the midfourteenth century. In Central Asia we see the revival of Amir Temur and the establishment of an independent kingdom of Temurids in the XIV-XV centuries, liberated from Mongol colonialism.

If we look at the history of tourism, our ancestors also visited other countries through travel, country studies, trade [1]. In the cities where the Great Silk Road took place, there are also our great scientists known for their famous works. The fact that the Great Silk Road passed through Central Asia is a proof of ancient development of tourism in Uzbekistan. Throughout the centuries, the history of this road has continued to be crossed by caravans traveling through various continents, countries, cities, deserts and barracks.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The history of the Great Silk Road is an inexhaustible treasure for thousands of generations and needs to be studied. Because there is no doubt that the Great Silk Road, which has served mankind for thousands of years, has a special place in the world development. The lonely caravan routes, which crossed the sand dunes thousands of years ago and brought them to distant lands, attracted people again at the end of the 20th century, on the threshold of the 21st century. Mankind once again felt and still feels the need for these ancient paths. Necessity, in turn, stimulates development. In particular, at the XXIV UNESCO General Conference in Paris in November 1987, on the initiative of 10 countries, it was decided to study the Great Silk Road on a large scale international project from 1988 to 1997 [4].

This project involves a comprehensive study of the rich cultural history of the Central Asian peoples. The main goal is to establish stronger cultural and economic ties between East and West, and to

improve relations between many peoples living on these great continents. In some Eastern countries (China, India, Japan, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan) special scientific institutions have been established to study the Great Silk Road. For example, by decision of the United Nations and UNESCO, the International Institute for Central Asian Studies was opened in Samarkand. Future research will serve to uncover new aspects of these international trade and cultural ties.

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